

## Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 FDRE-00  
OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03  
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-08 AGRE-00 /092 W  
-----126927 131810Z /46

O R 131558Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2009  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMCONSUL CAPETOWN  
AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
USMISSION GENEVA  
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 1041

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SREF, BC, RH  
SUBJECT: UNHCR APPEAL FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN BOTSWANA

REF: A) GABORONE 927 (NOTAL) B) ALBERTI-KEOGH TELECON APRIL 12.

1.BEGIN SUMMARY AS ANTICIPATED BY REFTEL, RHODESIAN REFUGEE  
SITUATION IN BOTSWANA APPEARS TO BE APPROACHING A CRISIS  
WITH 6,500 REFUGEES EITHER IN OR ON THEIR WAY TO THE CAMPS  
DESPITE CONTINUATION OF THE UNHCR SPONSORED AIRLIFT  
OF 3000 TO ZAMBIA. SITE FOR NEW CAMP TO ACCOMODATE 20,000  
REFUGEES HAS BEEN PICKED. UNHCR HERE HAS REQUESTED IMMEDIATE  
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USG EMERGENCY FUND OF 100,000 DOLLARS TO GET THE CAMP STARTED.  
IN ADDITION UNHCR REP HAS ASKED STATUS OF UNHCR REQUEST MADE  
TO US MISSION IN GENEVA A MONTH AGO FOR 325,000 DOLLARS  
TO PAY FOR THE UNHCR-CHARTERED FLIGHTS. THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA  
URGENTLY ASSOCIATES ITSELF WITH THESE REQUESTS. ACTION REQUESTED  
PLEASE ADVISE ON USG RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR 100,000 DOLLARS AND  
ON STATE OF CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR 325,000 DOLLARS. END

OF SUMMARY

2. UNHCR RESREP PERKINS CALLED ON CHARGE' AFTERNOON APRIL 12 AND EXPLAINED THAT REFUGEE POPULATION FOR THAT DAY AT FRANCISTOWN AND SELEBI-PIKWE CAMPS WAS 6,236 WITH 300 NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES STILL AT THE BORDER. PERKINS SAID THAT THIS UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER WAS REACHED DESPITE FACT THAT THE UNHCR-SPONSORED AIRLIFT OF 3,000 PEOPLE WAS OVER TWO-THIRD'S COMPLETED. PERKINS ADMITTED THAT WHEN EVER THE CAMP POPULATION WENT ABOVE 5,000 EVERYTHING BROKE DOWN INCLUDING THE SEWAGE SYSTEM AND THE FOOD SUPPLY.

3. TO COMBAT THE EMERGENCY PERKINS SAID HE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA HAD CHOSEN SITE FOR A NEW REFUGEE CAMP NEAR THE VILLAGE OF MOSETSE, LOCATED AN HOUR AND A HALF'S DRIVE FROM FRANCISTOWN ON THE FRANCISTOWN/MAUN ROAD. THE SITE IS 234 SQUARE KILOMETERS AND COULD ULTIMATELY ACCOMMODATE 20,000; THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHICH HE THOUGHT COULD BE EXPECTED BY THE END OF 1978. HE ESTIMATED THE COST OF COMPLETING THE CAMP AT \$500,000. IN THE MEANTIME, THERE WAS NO CHOICE BUT TO UTILIZE TENTS (FOR THIS PURPOSE UNHCR HAS 300 TENTS TO ACCOMMODATE 1500 PEOPLE) AS WELL AS THE FACILITIES WHICH ALREADY EXISTED AT THE SITE, I.E. TWO HOUSES, BORE HOLES FOR WATER, PUMPS AND A SMALL POWER STATION

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OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 EB-08 AGRE-00 PM-05 H-01  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GABORONE 1041

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

4. PERKINS REITERATED HIS COMPLAINT THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOB HAD BEEN ALERTED AS EARLY AS LAST JULY TO THE POSSIBILITY OF UNMANAGEABLE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES ENTERING THE COUNTRY AND THAT A PLACE WOULD HAVE TO BE READIED FOR THEM, IT HAD FOR POLITICAL REASONS, BEEN RELUCTANT TO CHANGE FROM POLICY OF PROVIDING TRANSIT. FACILITIES ONLY. PERKINS SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD DONE MUCH OF THE PRELIMINARY PLANNING LAST JULY, HE WOULD REQUIRE SEVERAL WEEKS TO COME UP WITH ARCHITECT'S DRAWINGS AND TO FINALIZE PLANS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CAMP.

5. PERKINS MADE THE FOLLOWING EMERGENCY FINANCIAL REQUESTS  
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OF THE USG:

A. \$100,000 AS "SEED MONEY" TO BE SPENT OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS IN PLANNING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION FOR THE CAMP. FOR EXAMPLE, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO ACT QUICKLY TO PURCHASE THE FACILITIES ALREADY IN PLACE TO STOP THEIR DEMOLITION AND DISMANTELING. PERKINS ADDED IT WAS LIKELY THAT THE UNHCR WOULD ASK THE UNITED STATES FOR MORE MONEY TO HELP IN THE MAINTENANCE OF THE CAMP.

B. PERKINS REITERATED A REQUEST WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN MADE OF THE USG BY THE UNHCR IN GENEVA ONE MONTH AGO FOR THE SUM OF \$325,000 TO PAY FOR THE UNHCR CHARTERED FLIGHTS OF THE 3,000 REFUGEES TO ZAMBIA. PERKINS SAID THAT IF THESE FUNDS WERE MADE AVAILABLE SOON, UNHCR WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THE FLIGHTS FOR SOME TIME. HE FEARED THAT IF MOMENTUM OF THE FLIGHTS WERE TO STOP, THE ZAMBIANS WOULD HAVE TIME TO REFLECT AND REFUSE FURTHER ENTRY OF REFUGEES FROM BOTSWANA. PERKINS FURTHER NOTED THAT OF THE 2,200 REFUGEES FLOWN TO DATE TO ZAMBIA, ALL EXCEPT 14 WERE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

6. PERKINS SAID THAT HE HAD ALSO APPROACHED THE SWEDES AND BRITISH HERE AND THAT THE FORMER HAD REACTED IN A REASONABLY POSITIVE WAY. HE SAID THAT THE CHARGE COULD EXPECT A TELEPHONE CALL FROM SECRETARY TO CABINET STEENKAMP IN SUPPORT OF THE UNHCR REQUEST.

7. CONCERNING THE REQUEST FOR \$325,000 THE CHARGE RESPONDED THAT THE EMBASSY HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE REQUEST BUT WOULD QUERY THE DEPARTMENT ON THE STATE OF OUR CONSIDERATION. CONCERNING THE \$100,000 REQUEST THE CHARGE SAID HE THOUGHT THERE MIGHT

BE A CHANCE FOR A FAVORABLE RESPONSE AS LONG AS USG ASSISTANCE WERE KEPT IN MULTI-LATERAL CHANNELS.

8. IN FURTHER DEVELOPMENT, STEENKAMP CALLED AFTERNOON OF APRIL  
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13, REFERRED TO THE BURGEONING REFUGEE CRISIS AND URGENTLY ASSOCIATED THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA WITH THE UNHCR APPEAL.

9. COMMENT AS SUGGESTED BY REFTTEL, IT APPEARS THAT A REAL RHODESIAN REFUGEE CRISIS IN BOTSWANA IS IN THE OFFING OWING. IT CAUSES ARE INCREASED FLOWS OF REFUGEE AND THE DISCONTINUATION OF THE REGULAR CHARTER FLIGHTS TO ZAMBIA. WE URGE THAT WHATEVER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THE USG IS ABLE TO GIVE, IT BE DONE IMMEDIATELY TO MEET THE EMERGENCY. ACCORDING TO PERKINS, THE \$100,000 REQUESTED IS NEEDED FOR EXPENDITURES TO BE MADE OVER THE NEXT THREE WEEKS.

ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE ADVISE ON USG RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR \$100,000 AND ON STATE OF CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR \$325,000.

ALBERTI

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REFUGEE RELIEF  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014